E. MATURE AGE

1. *The Bantu Ideal.*

581 554 562 885 The married man is called " he who has his home " (a ni le kwakwe) in opposition to the single man (nkhwenda). But let us say at once that the kind of individual called bachelor does not abound amongst the Bantus. Only the utterly wretched, invalids, and the weak-minded, are deprived of legal marriage, which for the black man is and remains the one object in life. It is through his wife and children that he becomes somebody in society. This fact does not appear during the first year of wedlock, for the newly married woman must cook at the fireplace of her mother-in-law. She is hardly more than a servant during a whole year ; she does not possess her own pot ; and this must be so because she does not yet eat the mealies of her own garden, having ploughed her fields in her former domicile the previous year. Her husband eats with her. He is not yet 595 a lord. But if he is rich, if he is the heir of an important man, he will not be long in buying a second and third wife.

These new marriages will be contracted like the first, but with less pomp. It may even happen that the feast is held in the husband's village, if he is middle-aged and is celebrating his fifth or sixth wedding.

595 342 556 592 361 For each new wife, he will build a hut. He has begun his village when building the house of his first wife, the great wife, (nsati lwe nkulu) as she is called, who will remain the principal one whatever may happen. While, without compass, he was drawing on the ground, with the marvellous instinct of the South African Native, the circumference of the circle on which the patched reed walls of his dwelling were to rise, while he was covering this circular wall with a conical roof, he was saying to himself : " I establish my home ; I inaugurate my village ". During the following years, the aim of his life will be to complete little by little another wider circle... When he has bought his

556 ed by so many good things! Sycophants are not lacking, "Good
345 evening, son of so and so!" they say. "You are one of the
374 great men of the country." And in return for these and other compliments, the magnanimous Gidja shares his feast with his admirers!

Strangers are crossing the country and inquire where they can be received. "Go to Gidja" they are told. "A ni tshengwe, a fuya tshengwe" viz. "he is the possessor of a harem! He is not killed by famine! He has beer to drink every day! He can give food to poor people. Even then, some of it remains on the plate and is eaten by little boys and dogs in the square. There is always abundance there." And the travellers come and enter (khuleka) his village, after which they will tell in their homes the story of the magnificence of Gidja and extol his hospitality.

Thus the man who has succeeded in life becomes famous, his advice will carry weight in the discussions in which he takes part; he will perhaps be even more esteemed than the chief himself, though he does not enjoy the special prestige which the royal family owes to the blood running in its veins.

Conclusion: the greatness of an African is before all else a matter of pots, and the matter of pots is closely connected with polygamy!

885 During these years of mature age the evolution of a man is not
334 marked by special ceremonies. There is one custom however which is common to all, and which marks an advance in their social position. It is that of fixing the wax ring.

II. *Fixing the wax ring.*

885 Amongst the South Africans, the crown is not the appanage of
177 royalty. All men having reached mature age have the right to
554 adorn themselves with it. It is true, it is not a diadem of precious
301 stones, but a large ring of wax. This custom seems to have a Zulu origin. The Ba-Sutho do not know it and the Ba-Thonga, who all practise it, have taken it from the conquering tribe which owes its fortune to the famous Chaka. This habit has spread all

885 177 554 over the country from Maputju to the borders of Gaza, but only during the last hundred years. This black crown is called *ngiyana* (Ro.) or *shidlodlo* (Dj.), and the crowning ceremony is called *khehla*. From this verb has come the term *makhehla*, a name given to all those who wear this ornament.

885 301 527 This ceremony is accomplished in the following way. At a given time, the chief informs all the men of a certain age that they must prepare their rings. The counsellors and the sons of the royal family who belong to this " class " must go to the capital. Several oxen are killed ; the back tendons are carefully preserved and made into strings. This being done, the master hairdressers, that is to say those who know how to fix these strange appendages, are called in.

They come, supplied with small sticks (tinhlamalala, the central nervures of the leaves of the milala palm-tree) which they plait together with these strings made of tendons so as to form the skeleton, the circular frame of the crown. These strings are drawn through the curly hair, all round the head, so as to fix the frame of the crown above the temples. The remaining hair on the sides and behind has been previously shaven. The chief possesses a provision of wax ; the wax which is preferred is not that of bees, but the rosy secretion of certain grubs which is found on some bushes, and which the young boys of the capital go and collect. This wax is mixed with different ingredients to make it black. It is fixed on the frame of sticks and shaped into a large round or oval ring, as black as jet, which can be made to shine brightly. When all is finished, they eat the flesh of the oxen, enjoy themselves, dance and celebrate this great occasion!

885 301 The more humble subjects crown themselves in their own villages, where tonsorial artists come to adorn them. The poor go to the hairdresser, and do not use strings made of tendons (they have no ox to kill), but strings made of the fibres of a palm-tree, which are cheaper. It is said that nowadays palm-tree strings (bukuha) have almost entirely supplanted the others, the more so as they are not spoilt by the washing of the crown ; whilst, if the *ngiyana* is fixed with tendons, no water must fall on it, or it would soften.

Moreover the crown must be taken care of ; it can be spoilt

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

and knocked out of shape by a blow or if its owner goes through thorny bushes. A *khehla* who has some self-respect will frequently polish and repair this valuable ornament, for it is a sign of mature age. He who has been ordered by the chief to wear it no longer carries burdens on his head; his crown would be spoilt! He will be accompanied by a boy who carries his parcels; he himself will only carry his stick or his assagai. He will at once be known as one of the mature men of the tribe. This is not to say that the mere fact of wearing the *ngiyana* gives the right of taking part in the important affairs of the country; the counsellors alone possess this right; but from amongst the "crowned," will be chosen the man who is sent to another chief to treat of political questions, for instance.

When the hair grows (for, though it is curly, it may become long), the crown rises with it and becomes more or less unsteady, which must be most uncomfortable! The best thing would be to cut the ornament off and then replace it. Mr. Mandjia, one of our neighbours at Rikatla, was probably too lazy to undertake this job, so he put a small red handkerchief between his skull and the crown to prevent it from wobbling.

At a certain time all the *ngiyana* disappeared from the land of Nondwane. The chief Mapunga was dead! The loss, kept secret for a year, had been made public, and the law requires all the mature men to take off their crowns when the sovereign of the country is dead. They take the wax from the frame, and make a ball of it; this they fix on a little stick, and place this stick in the roof of their hut above the door. The frame is hung up quite close by, and they leave these objects there till the new chief orders his subjects to re-make their crowns. This shows clearly that the crowning custom is in close relation with the national life of the tribe. The "makhehla" also form special battalions in the army.

Nowadays, however, this custom is not observed as religiously as in bygone times. Life is harder, one must go and earn pounds sterling in the port of Lourenço Marques, or in the gold mines, and one can no longer indulge in a lazy life! It may therefore happen that a poor man will refuse to wear the crown, and say to

178 554 his chief : " What shall I eat ? Will you feed me ? Must I not carry burdens on my head ? I do not know what to do with the ngiyana. " — " Tiko dji bolile, " say the old people shaking their heads, " A ke he na nao," that is to say : " The country is falling into decay, going to the dogs. There is no longer any law... " Oh! the good old times!

F. OLD AGE

888 The man however grows older, older. His hair and his beard turn white, the wrinkles deepen on his face. He stoops. His skin no longer shines with health and corpulence. His wives die and his glory fades. His crown loses the lustre of bygone times. If a branch scratches it, if a knock spoils it, he has not a shilling to pay the repairer! He is forsaken. He is less respected and often only a burden unwillingly supported. The children laugh at him. If the cook sends them to carry to the lonely grandfather his share of food in his leaky old hut, the young rascals are capable of eating it on the way and of depriving the old man of his meal, afterwards pretending that they have done what they were told! And when, between two huts, under shelter of the hedge of reeds, he warms his round-shouldered back in the rays of the setting sun, huddled there, quite weighed down by his years, lost in some senile dream, they point to the decrepit form and say to each other : " He! Shikhunkununu! " — " It is the bogey-man, the ogre! "

People of mature age show scarcely more consideration for old people than do the young ones. Lately in the district of Matjolo, an old man and an old woman, Kobole and Minyokwana, were forsaken by their children, who were moving to another part of the country. They were left in a miserable shed, merely a roof supported by some poles without any reeds to close in the wall. Some compassionate souls took pity on this poor wretched couple, who had fallen into second childhood and did not even know what they were saying.

765 782 604 little of it into a glass and raises it to the lips of the old man. "He cuts his prayer" and while all the attention of the public is concentrated upon this act (which belongs also to the ritual, as the priest must be the first to partake of the offering), the wives of the batukulu rush towards the shoulders, lungs and hoofs of the goats and the bottle of wine, seize them and run away towards the west. They have stolen the meat of the sacrifice! At once all stand up and follow them laughing, shouting and pelting them with the *psanyi*, which they had kept for this purpose. The thieves hide themselves behind some bush and eat the meat. Uterine nephews are representatives of the gods, as we shall see later on, and they assert their right by stealing the offering and eating it up.

This ceremony is highly characteristic as it embodies some of the principal ideas of the Thongas in the domain of religion, social life and taboo. It was worth while describing it, and we shall refer to it later on, when dealing with sacrifices and the position of the uterine nephews in the family.

765 292 554 825 The crushing down of the hut is not performed in exactly the same manner amongst the Ba-Ronga. In the clans *South of the Bay*, they only *close* it (pfala yindlu). They dig holes in front of the door, into which they insert poles of the bush called *nhleha*, tying thorny branches horizontally to them. The shield of the deceased is placed against the door. The religious rite then takes place and from the skins of the sacrificed goats strips are cut, which the widows will have to wear *en bandoulière* during the following months of their widowhood. The astragalus bones are kept and hung round the neck. The gall-bladder is also preserved and fixed in the hair of the new master of the village as a sign of his new position.

765 596 In the *district of Makaneta*, on the estuary of the Nkomati, the ceremony comprises two successive acts. First there is also a *provisory closing* of the hut, which can take place one month after the death and is accompanied by the family gathering and the religious ceremony. One year later, when the inheritance is adjudicated, the hut is crushed down, but only if it belonged to a headman of the village and if the kraal is obliged to move in

622 but it must not become tyrannical. They must govern for the
546 benefit of their subordinates.
264 This peculiar position of the numzane amongst his people is
654 illustrated, in a striking way, by the laws of distribution of the joints of meat on the day when the headman kills an ox to feast them. The various portions must be distributed to the relatives according to the place which they occupy in the family. The headman, nominal proprietor of the ox, will keep the breast (shifuba). This is not only the sternum and the ribs, but most of the viscera which are contained in them. The tripe, the heart, the kidneys will be put all together inside the stomach, and constitute what is called *nkopfu wa homu*. The headman will probably send the heart and the kidneys to his wives (tinkosikazi, his queens!). The brother who comes next will receive one of the hindlegs ; the third in rank one of the forelegs. The elder son will eat the second hindleg, and the younger son the second foreleg. They will eat this meat with their families, or houses (tiyindlu). This custom is very old (1).

Let us continue with the distribution. To the brothers-in-law, or to the relatives-in-law generally, the tail is sent. It is the portion of the sister. But it does not consist only of the tail properly so-called ; it comprises all the hind parts of the animal, especially the rump (kondjo). The malume (maternal uncle) receives part of the loins (muhlubula). The liver is put aside for the grandfather and the old people generally, because it is soft and they have no teeth to gnaw the bones. The head belongs to all the men of the village, who must eat it on the hubo, as we have seen. They may give the tongue (ndjaka) to the old men. It

622 (1) This custom is illustrated in a very interesting manner by the relative position
596 of the three clans occupying the South of the Bay. They are all descended from
264 Tembe (See page 23). *Tembe*, the ancestor, representing the elder branch of the royal family, ate the chest. He was the superior (hosi), and this rank is still held by
554 his descendants in the direct line. *Sabi* or Mpanyele, the second brother, or son of the second brother, ate the hindleg ; he was established later on in the Mathuthweni
618 district, between Tembe and Maputju. *Maputju*, the younger brother, head of the third branch, ate the foreleg. But he revolted against his elder brother and carved out for himself a kingdom which very soon became stronger than those of Tembe and Mathuthweni. Mathuthweni became more or less independent. But when people wish to remind the Maputju people of their inferior origin, they say to them : "Tembe ate the breast, Sabi the hindleg and Maputju the foreleg !"

622 is taboo for the women to eat it, or the under lip (See p. 184).
596 From each limb a small piece is taken (tshumbuta) and
264 placed on a skewer; it is the portion of the shepherds and of
554 the butchers, (makotjo ya babyisi). (See the tale of Piti, *Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, page 152). Sometimes the shepherds also receive the lungs and the spleen.

This way of distributing ox meat is called "ku tlhaba homu ba hamba milao," viz., "to kill an ox according to rule." Should a younger brother or a son kill an ox, he will send the breast to the master of the village, but he keeps all the limbs and does not observe the rules because, as he says: "It is enough to pay taxes to the chief of the country." Often one of the legs is sent to the chief of the clan.

Strange to say when a goat is killed none of these prescribed rules are followed, as they only concern the oxen.

622 These customs show clearly the position of the headman;
596 he is the master but also the father of his subordinates, and their provider.

1) He must *watch* over the village (basopa, Dutch word passop, universally adopted by the Natives). During the night, if his son is away working in Johannesburg, he takes care that no lovers come into the huts of his daughters-in-law, (a langusa bumbuye), and if he happens to catch one, he will make him pay the fine.

622 2) He is a true *justice of peace* amongst the inmates of the
692 village, doing his best to maintain good relations amongst them.
578 Suppose for instance that the pigs belonging to one of the inhab-
685 itants come out of their enclosure and over-run the gardens of another man. This man will go and say to the owner of the pigs:
643 "Such and such a thing has happened, please close the pigs' kraal more carefully." Should the same thing happen a second time, he will complain to the *numzane*. The headman will then go to the culprit and say: "You have not heeded the warning; you must pay compensation (djiha)." If the culprit listens to the "voice of the blood" (bushaka), he will obey and the matter will end smoothly; if not, the headman can only keep silent: he has no soldiers, no means of enforcing his judgment; the plaintiff will then go to the chief of the tribe to complain. The case will be

262 143 527 which is not eaten, and rub their faces with it. But *no religious ceremony is performed.* It is the same for the *fuma*, a paste made with the contents of the kwakwa fruit, a kind of Strychnos very similar to the nsala, but of a different taste. The ceremony was even more simple than with the almonds ; the chief used to send a little of this paste to each village saying : "Let this be the first bite you swallow : the new year has come!" (Luman, ku tlhese nguba.) No powder was used in connexion with it. The magical drug was used, on the other hand, when the luma of pumpkin leaves took place.

II. *The luma of the Kafir corn.*

262 643 782 769 796 The great, the official luma, amongst the Ronga clans, is that performed for the Kafir corn (mabele). The great wife of the chief grinds the first grains of Kafir corn reaped in the fields. She cooks the flour in a pot and pours into it some of the royal powder kept in the calabash, so as to make a *shimhimbi* (See page 42). The chief takes a little of the food and offers it to the spirits of his ancestors, at the main entrance of the royal kraal. He prays to them in the following terms : "Here has the new year come! Precede us, you gods, and luma, so that, for us also, Kafir corn shall help our body, that we may become fat, not thin, that the witches may increase the corn, make it to be plentiful, so that, even if there is only a small field, big baskets may be filled! (Nguba hi yoleyi! Rangan ñwine, mi luma, ñwi Psikwembu! Na hine, mabele ma tjhama amirin yeru psinene, hi kuluka hi nga wondji. Abaloyi ba yandjisa, psi tala ngopfu, nambi shi shisi-ñwanyana shi shiñwe, a ku tale tingula!)"

262 643 796 554 609 After this religious ceremony everyone luma in turn, the chief first, then the sub-chiefs, then the counsellors, then the warriors who have killed enemies in battle, then the headmen of the kraals who have all been summoned to the capital. Should one of the headmen be prevented from coming by illness, his younger brother will not precede him. He will bring him the *shimhimbi* in a leaf ; the elder will take it, and, after him, the other brothers. Women do not eat the magic powder. Neither do strangers,

262 eats freely in his house according to his good pleasure. Formerly
821 we used to take the oxen of the man who had dared to steal the
796 new year."

Conclusion on the luma rite.

796 All these luma rites[1] of first fruits seem to have primarily a *religious*
782 *origin*. The Bantus do not feel that they dare enjoy the products of
554 the soil unless they have first given a portion of them to their gods.
Is it not these gods who make the cereals grow? Have they not the power even of controlling the wizards who bewitch the fields? These rites are also evidently dictated by the *sense of hierarchy*. A subject must not precede his chief nor a younger brother the elder in the use of the new harvest, else they would kill those in authority. Such an act is against order. We shall see that, even when the seeds are sown, the elders must take precedence. But the custom seems also to have been actuated by the idea of *passage*. There is a passage from one year to another. For the Thongas, I think the new year begins
805 twice every year: it begins when tilling recommences, in July, August,
796 when the heat returns. This is the hlobo. It begins a second time at
789 harvest, and then there is passage from the food of the last year to the food of this year. This is the nguba (Ro.) or ñwaka (Dj.). Though the luma rites do not bear all the characteristics of a true passage rite, like those of circumcision or moving, we may observe in the luma of bukanye a kind of marginal period of general licence, when the ordinary laws are more or less suspended. The taking of a first mouthful probably signifies the aggregation to the new period, the magical powder used on this occasion being a protective measure to shield them from the calamities of this unknown year... And after all, is it not that feeling of fear which so easily takes possession of the heart of man when entering on a new state and starting something fresh, which has led the savage to surround the use of the first fruit with so many ritual precautions?

IV. *Taxation.*

643 The chief governs (fuma). *Fuma* means to command, but also to live in plenty, to be rich. The subject (nandja, follower) obeys; he follows the chief who marches before him just as the

1 [See pp. 394-404 in these categories as in 116-Analyst]

643 in the form of a *djimo*. (See Part IV.) Moreover the young
466 men are always at the disposal of the chief to clean his public square, build his huts, repair the thatched roofs of the royal kraal and organise hunting expeditions for him.

643 4. But the greater part of the royal revenue consists now in
651 *money* which the chief receives from his subjects. Mubvesha taxes each village a sum of 500 reis besides the regular basket of mealies. At the end of the bukanye feast, each village must send him another 500 reis to notify him that the feast is ended. When a young man returns from Johannesburg having made enough money to lobola a wife, he must leave £ 1.10.0 in the hands of the chief. The latter also recruits boys whom he sends to the recruiting agents, getting as much as £ 1 or £ 1.10.0 per head. When a sub-chief dies, his people inform the paramount chief of his death, bringing a sum of money (1500 reis). The chief, however, does not receive any portion of the inheritance in the case of a death. There is no taxation on the succession.

643 5. A great deal of money comes into the hands of the chief
651 *owing to fines which he imposes* when acting as supreme judge.
681 When a plaintiff brings a case and the culprit is condemned to pay him £ 25, Mubvesha keeps £ 10 for himself ; he retains £ 5 if the fine is £ 10.

643 Sub-chiefs do not tax their subjects as a rule. They must
631 bring to their superior all the products of taxation. They do
651 not "eat" anything. But in some cases the chief gives them a part of it. Thus Habele, sub-chief of Rikatla, used to "eat" half of the taxes brought to him by young men coming back from Johannesburg.

V. *Dangers and difficulties of the Chieftainship.*

643 Endowed with supernatural power which he owes to his magical
554 medicines, feared and sometimes loved by his subjects, with plenty to eat and richer than any of his people, who readily consent to be taxed, the chief occupies an enviable position. The chieftainship (buhosi), therefore, is very much sought after and no

643 538 177 334 one refuses to be a chief. Thonga tales recounting the story of some one who succeeded wonderfully in life often conclude by saying that this person was given a territory and became a chief... which seems to be the highest reward of virtue or wisdom. Nowadays, however, one may meet with cases where the heir to the chieftainship, having become a Christian, renounces that high position because he feels that there is an incompatibility between the Bantu way of ruling and his new faith.

643 But it would be a great error to think that a Thonga chief is, or can be, an autocratic despot. This may have been the case with Chaka, Lobengula or Gungunyana, when the tribe became an amalgamation of clans held together by military power ; in order to maintain their usurped authority, these chiefs had to be cruel despots. But this is a late development in the Bantu political system. I am now only taking into consideration the primitive form of tribal life, which is the clan life.

For a chief dangers may arise from three sources : from his own character, from the Thonga system of government itself, and from the law of succession.

1) The character of the chief.

A chief who wishes to succeed in his government *must have a good character*. If he imposes taxation, he must not use his wealth in a selfish way. For instance, when women bring him a *shiriwalo* of a dozen pots of beer, he must give them back one or two to quench their thirst. Moreover he must distribute most of the remaining pots to his men, who are on the *bandla*, always ready to share with him the advantages of his position.

Should he buy oxen with the product of the fines, he will be wise to slaughter one from time to time for his counsellors and for the whole clan. A chief who is good (a ni timpsalu) is said to *maintain* or to *save the country* (bekisa tiko). If he does not do that, he is severely criticised. Mubvesha, who used all his money to buy wives, and prevented all the men from seeing them, whilst he himself was too old to content them, was considered

be secret, or on the square, if there is no objection to making it public. The chief and his men sit on one side, the visitor on the other; if he wishes to conform strictly to all the laws of etiquette, he will first explain the matter to his own Agent General, who will communicate with the chief's special counsellor, repeating the words of the visitor, sentence by sentence; the counsellor will, in his turn, communicate with the chief, again telling him the whole story, as if he had not heard a word of it before. The affair will thus have passed through three hands and the answer should, in due formality, be given through the same channels. These precautions, which seem eminently superfluous, even somewhat ridiculous, to a person unacquainted with Bantu etiquette, evidently proceed from the fact that there are no stenographers or secretaries to furnish any written record of the proceedings, so that it is necessary to have as many witnesses as possible and that these should thoroughly understand the matter under consideration.

II. *Judicial Cases.*

1) Sense of justice.

As has often been remarked, the Bantus possess a strong sense of justice. They believe in social order and in the observance of the laws and, though these laws are not written, they are universal and perfectly well known. The law is the custom, that which has always been done. The old men, the counsellors and more particularly the counsellors of the capital, are those who can speak authoritatively. But everybody is welcome in the *hubo*, where matters are discussed; even a stranger can take part in the discussion. "No one is excluded, if he speaks rightly; only fools, those who do not know anything" (Mankhelu).

This participation in the discussions of the hubo has developed the sense of law to a wonderful extent amongst the Bantus. They are all born advocates and judges, and take a great interest in this business! No wonder therefore that the Thonga vocabulary

701 726 regiment, with its counsellors at its head, is called in turn by the organisers of the army; (at Zihlahla they were Mahagane, the chief's uncle, and Mpompi), and the several companies of the regiments form ranks one behind the other. I have already described this imposing circle, when treating of the coronation of the chief. Every warrior can take in at a glance the entire assemblage. Seen from the interior, it is an unbroken circle of shields, resting perpendicularly on the ground, and all touching; behind, a crowd of men, the greater the number, the deeper the ranks, a forest of feathers waving above their heads.

701 726 561 554 596 The mukhumbi is not however a perfect circle. It is rather like a *horse shoe*, as there remains an *opening* (nyangwa or sangwa), which gives access into it. On either side of this *door* the regiment of the young men takes up its position; the Dhlanazo in the Nkuna mukhumbi and the Ndumakazulu in that of Zihlahla. At the opposite end, facing the entrance, is the *chest of the army* (shifuba sha yimpi), where the chief stands surrounded by the men of riper age, the strongest of whom act as a body guard. Between the chest and the opening, on both sides, the middle-aged warriors occupy the wings, the elder ones nearer the chest, the younger nearer the entrance. This disposition is highly significant; notice that it is exactly the same as that of the village itself, a large door (mharana); on both sides of the entrance, the huts of the unmarried inhabitants (lao and nhanga); at the back the huts of the headman, and, at the sides, those of his younger brothers. The idea of age and of hierarchy entirely dominates both these social manifestations!

701 As regards the numerical strength of the mukhumbi, one of my informants who belonged to the Ndumakazulu regiment —young men from 19 to 25 years old—told me that he estimated the war strength of his regiment at about 500 men: the entire Zihlahla circle might be put at 2000 strong.

I have often seen the Nkuna mukhumbi assembled. I had even the opportunity of addressing its warriors during the Sikororo war of 1901. They were between five and six hundred in all. But this clan is very much scattered and many warriors were not present.

727 765 killed, "because the whole country would mourn : — they have not been killed by the mat (likuku) at home, but by the assagai on the battle-field! They are men! If any one weeps he will have to pay £ 2." (Mboza.)

726 763 When the Maputju yimpis fought against Nondwane in 1876, in the battle which took place near Malangotiba, (3 km west of Rikatla), they were decimated and eventually repulsed. Their chief Musongi sent them back to fight again. They refused. Then he punished them in the following way : he condemned them to go and fetch water with pots, like women, but they had to go on their knees to the pool, saying : "It is the result of our cowardice" — (Ngi ndaba ya bugwala). Afterwards they had to extinguish a bush fire with their hands, and came home very much scorched and burnt.

When the yimpi is victorious, the return is marked by important 727 songs called *hubu* (cl. dji-ma). The regiments follow each other, 533 each singing his own *hubu*, and they at once build the mukhumbi 535 when they reach the village of the chief. They dance, dance their doughty deeds. Suddenly silence is required ; the counsellors narrate to the chief how the fighting has proceeded and tell him the names of those who have killed enemies, those who have struck the first blow and their *bahlomuri*, viz., those who transfixed the leg and the arm. After which the heroes "gila" to their heart's content, together with the bahlomuri. They are proud! They are applauded! They are the great men of the day, the *tingwaza*, the saviours of the chief!

This leads me to consider the very curious customs connected with the slayers and the slain on the battle-field.

I. THE FATE OF THE SLAIN AND THE TREATMENT OF THE SLAYERS.

1. *The fate of the slain.*

554 727 When a man has slain an enemy, he has covered himself with the most enviable glory : he has the right to perform the war-dance before the chief. He takes away all the garments from

727 enemy died later on, after his return to his home. Makhani did not
828 know this. One day he became suddenly delirious and rushed about
789 all over the village trying to stab his own people. "Oho!" said those
783 who saw him, "it is because the man he wounded has died!" They at once called the magician who possessed the nuru medicine, a man of the Mapsanganye clan, who came with his calabash. In this calabash there was a carved stick cut from a tree called shiralala, the extremity of which must always remain plunged in the medicine. The magician dipped this stick into a mixture made of honey and the drug, and passed it over the lips of Makhani, who seized it with his tongue, sucking it as the magician moved it from right to left, and licking his lips. A drop of the medicine was then put into each ear, on each upper eye-lid, and below the sternum. He was then cured and, taking a lighted torch, he threw it in the direction of the enemy's country with threatening words: "A ba fe, bafo, ba bola i. e. Let them die, the enemies, let them rot. I will kill still others!" Every day he had to go to the pool and wash his body, treating himself with the tintebe powder.

727 During the weeks following the battle heroes do not only
301 wear the tintebe, besides these miluru amulets, they have the
703 right to wear certain trophies. These are in the first place
554 antelope or goat's horns pierced at the base; they thread a string through the hole thus made and tie them round their necks (See illustrations, p. 33 and 453). They also make necklaces of small pieces of wood, notched in a peculiar manner and burnt in the fire; a hole is made through these and they are strung together like beads and worn round the neck. Sometimes these necklaces are made so long that they are worn as a bandoleer. I recollect seeing the Matjolo warriors returning from their expedition of February 1895: they came to show themselves off to the Whites at Lourenço Marques, gloriously proud of having massacred defenceless women and children whom they had surprised in the early hours of the morning! People threw them pieces of silver which they converted into brandy! (1)

727 (1) The terrible malediction which rests on those who have killed an enemy
775 is well illustrated by the following story which the Rev. C. Maphophe told me of an
761 event that had taken place not long ago in the Shishongi country (Manyisa district). A man of the Ndzindzi family had killed a Ndjao during one of Gungunyana's expedi-

towards the fence into the pits. My informant asserts that the result was sometimes marvellous ; the pits were soon full and the animals coming behind ran over their comrades and escaped ; the men followed closely and stabbed the antelopes in the neck. But this of course meant the wholesale destruction of game. Happily a stop has been put to this kind of hunting. 224 476

Nowadays Natives use *iron traps* which they buy in the European stores, some of which are quite sufficiently strong to catch a duiker or a wild pig. They smear them with another charm, the *butiba*, a kind of brownish moss growing on the roots of a tree called shivumbunkanye. It also is said to have the power of "making the game forget." 224 824

I have described some other traps when dealing with boys' games.

Everybody was allowed to hunt in the good old times when the White authorities had not yet introduced so many restrictive regulations. Ordinary hunters are called bahloti or bazingeli (Zulu term). But there were others who had made a kind of trade of hunting, regular, professional hunters, who were called *phisa* (pl. maphisa). They were not satisfied to kill an occasional antelope near their village, but they undertook big expeditions to the great deserts of the Hlengwe country where game was plentiful and where the most precious of all, i. e., elephants, abounded. It cannot be said that the maphisa formed a definite class in the tribe like the bone-throwers, for instance. I never heard of a true initiation taking place prior to their becoming maphisa. Yet they were known and recognized as a kind of superior caste and were very proud of their name of maphisa. They claimed a special power over big game owing to the mysterious rites which they practised; thus they partook more or less of the nature of magicians. I have come across some of them and heard marvellous stories about others. Old Madyashikulu of the Nhlongo clan, whom I met in the Ntimane country, near Antioka, boasted that he could pick out an elephant in a herd and force it to come and fall down at the foot of the tree up which he had climbed. He had then only to stab it from his retreat, and kill it ; after which he came down from the tree to 224 554 791

224 554 791 dance over the carcase of his victim! Another was Mubandane, a relation of Mboza, who lived in Nondwana. As is customary with many Natives of the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques, he hunted elephants for a Portuguese trader, named Fonseca, who provided him with guns and powder. When ready to undertake his hunting trip to the north of Gazaland (Mosapa), he had to undergo a purification (hlambo). His medicine-man cooked a pot full of his drugs, washed him with the froth and poured the contents of the pot on the roof, over the entrance of the hunter's hut. Mubandane had then to stoop and enter his hut, the water leaking through the grass and falling on his shoulders. These words were pronounced by the medicine-man, during this ritual entry into the hut: "Go and be happy! Though the rain fall on you, though the dew make you wet, when you sleep, you will be everywhere as in a hut; everywhere it will be like home (kaya). You will have taken your hut with you, you will enter it in a wet state!"

224 784 Other maphisa were the hippopotamus hunters settled on the banks of the Nkomati river, whose customs I shall describe later on.

In connection with their *hunting trips*, these professional hunters are subject to many taboos. As we have just seen, they must undergo a purification before starting, and also be inoculated in the wrists with special drugs, the most important being those of the tintebe (I. p. 479) the same which are used by the slayers of enemies in battle. Another favourite medicine for hunters is made from the piece of meat which is found between the heart and the lungs of big animals. In some cases they have to prepare themselves for their expedition by daily ablutions and by absolute continence for a certain number of days. The sacrifice of a fowl is also sometimes made before starting. It is taboo for adults to eat the meat of this fowl; it might endanger the success of the expedition. Little children may eat it: "they are quiet" (i. e. they have no sexual relations), and so the hunting will not be spoilt. When all these preparations are finished, the hunters start with their rattles, singing special songs, the songs of the hunters (Part V).

The trip itself may last for months, and constitutes a kind of

782 their protection : "May the harvest be plentiful ; may the cattle multiply ; may all our wives become pregnant." He uses by preference negative expressions : "Be not angry against us ; may the cows not slip their calves ; may our wives have no miscarriages, etc." In the meantime the people continue the same clapping of hands (called ku diya or ku losa gupsi, gupsi expressing exactly the hollow sound produced by the curved hands).

Notwithstanding this ritual clapping of hands, not much respect is shown by those present. They chat and joke whilst the chief of the clan is praying. A little tobacco has been spread as a libation on the graves and all help themselves to it. The influence of European ideas can be noticed ; a man cries : "Take off your hats!" and most of the men obey, showing that they are conscious that this is a religious ceremony worthy of respect.

As soon as the ceremony is over, they begin to dance. Immediately the clapping changes. It is now done with the hands held flat. It is chiefly the women, especially the old ones, who dance. Gabaze, the principal wife of the Nkuna chief Muhlaba, who is a Makaringe, the sister of Mugwaleni, makes herself conspicuous by her contortions. These are the ordinary dances.

They eat the roasted meat ; they drink the beer brought by the women. The portions offered to the manes are eaten as well as the rest, and I did not observe that they were reserved to special persons. The skin of the victim is cut into small strips which the men tie round the right wrist, the women round the left."

b) *National Offerings.*

782 These are those offered at the capital, to the ancestors of the
769 chief, but on behalf of the whole clan, because the gods of the
796 reigning family have control over the clan, just as the chief has
554 over the families of his subjects.

The regular national offering is the *luma* of the first fruits, their consecration, which I have described at length as one of the principal manifestations of the National life (I. p. 396-406). The Bantu conception of hierarchy is clearly illustrated by this custom : the gods must be the first to enjoy the produce of the new year, then the chief, the sub-chiefs, the counsellors, the

782 769 796 564 headmen, then the younger brothers in order of age. There is a stringent taboo directed against the person who precedes his superiors in the enjoyment of the first fruits, this law being applicable to Kafir corn or bukanye in certain clans, and also to sorghum, pumpkin leaves and beer, etc., in others (1).

834 782 The sexual taboo is also enforced. Those who contravene this law are said to "destroy the efficacity of the offering, nyumbisa mhamba." At the Ngoni Court, where sexual excesses were prevalent (see I. Annotatio 14) it is said that the chiefs used to remain continent for a fortnight at the time of luma. The reason of this taboo is probably the fact that the luma signifies the entering upon a new year, a new season, and is thus a rite of passage.

782 The religious meaning of the rite is clear : the gods, if deprived of the right they possess by virtue of their hierarchical position, would avenge themselves by threatening the harvest ; so they must be given their share first.

In the Maluleke clan, in which the customs seem to have been influenced by the Ba-Nyai, there is also a regular offering at the capital, when *the crops are still growing*. Rangane describes it as follows : "When the chief sees that the Kafir corn is threatened by the vermin in the fields, he says : "Perhaps the masters of the country (i. e. my ancestors who are dead) are angry ; perhaps I have not worshipped them fittingly." He summons the sons of the royal family (mangalakana) from all parts of the country, prepares beer, and selects a goat for the sacrifice ; they assemble around the graves with the sons and the uterine nephews, where they worship, and then, after eating all that is to be eaten, they return."

The special national offerings are those in connection with rain. If the rain falls at the right season, the sacrifice will not be made ; but should it fail to do so, the whole ritual will be gone through. This sacrifice for rain, is, as has already been mentioned (p. 318) called *phokolo* amongst the Bilen clans, and is performed in the

(1) Amongst the Malulekes a *second luma* is necessary after harvest, when brewing the first beer. It seems that the sub-chiefs or even headmen, settled in districts far away from the capital, can obtain a special license to perform the luma ceremony on their own account, but they must first apply for this permission, and after having finished, they must forward the chief's share to him.